

Challenge Founders

NoRTEC & OneStop Network
California Labor & Workforce
Development Agency
California Employment Development
Department
USDA Rural Development
CSU, Chico,
College of Engineering
Butte College
City of Chico
Golden Capital Network
Guillon Brouhard Real Estate

iHub

Governor's Office of Economic
Development
Wavepoint Venture Capital
3CORE
CEPCO
CSU, Chico CED

iPartners

PG&E



innovation lab

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*Accerlating innovation,
commercialiation and company
growth in the North State*

PROJECT UPDATE: MARCH 2001

Background:

In June 2010 through NoRTEC, a network of workforce, economic development and education partners applied for and received one of six Governor's Innovation Challenge grants. The grant was focused on:

- 1) accelerating technology transfer and commercialization,
- 2) scaling business growth through capital and resources, and
- 3) creating career pathways.

iHub:

In October 2010 the California Governor's Office of Economic Development (GoED) designated the region as a California iHub (innovator Hub). The first and only rural iHub in California and the first recognition as an *"emerging innovation region"*.

Innovation Lab:

Anchoring the iHub and the cornerstone of the Challenge Grant is the **Innovation Lab** and Incubator located at the Hegan Lane Business Park, Chico.

The Innovation Lab concept was the result of meetings with businesses to identify their needs, which were primarily "access to technical expertise of the University" and "access to capital".

The Innovation Lab is co-managed by Jon Gregory, Golden Capital Network, providing technical assistance and access to capital and Daren Otten, CSU Chico, Coordinator of the Sustainable Manufacturing Program and commercializing products.

- Springboard Biodiesel, the first tenant has created 4 jobs since locating early this year. USDA Innovator of the Year, 2010.
- Training courses, business meetings and seminars are being scheduled for the Lab "Board Room" and the Lab Team.



Springboard Biodiesel is a manufacturer of small batch biodiesel equipment; businesses such as Sierra Nevada Brewing can make ASTM-grade biodiesel from vegetable oil or "yellow grease" from their kitchens.

Donors

The Governor's Innovation Challenge Grant, which is providing the seed funding for the Innovation Lab and the innovation services to businesses, was supported through kin-kind donations of time and expertise.

We thank all the supporters and their commitment to this initiative:

- AES
- Benders Brothers
- Chabin Concepts
- Chico Electric
- Energy Efficiency Training Academy
- Fafco
- Five star
- Helio
- MC2 Design
- Morrison & Company
- North Valley LEAN
- Opel
- Private Equity Partners
- Recology
- RHA
- SCALE
- Sustainable Management Consulting
- World Bridge

Early Results:

- 1) **Commercializing New Products:** Five new companies in the Proof of Concept stage – Recycle polymer plastic, vertical wheelchair, bike-based food cart, off-road steering stabilizer, recycled sustainable drywall solutions. These new products, if brought to market, could represent over 50 jobs.

Challenge Team: A team of engineering students are challenged to identify potential products from hard-to-dispose waste materials at landfills. Concepts developed will be presented to Venture Executive for feasibility testing.

- 2) **Scaling Business Growth:** 27 companies are currently in the Business Portfolio at different stages of growth, capital and assistance, representing over **120 new jobs**.



Transfer Flow, Inc. is a nationally recognized fuel tank system manufacturer for aftermarket and OEM markets. With new CARB and EPA regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, new opportunities have developed for Transfer Flow in the emerging *Alternative Fuel & Vehicle* market.

- 3) **Deploying Clean Energy and Transportation:** Assisted City of Oroville and client prepare application to PG&E for 3MW utility scale solar field at Oroville Airport. Assisted local farmer with USDA REAP application.



Gilbert Farms is a family run farm in Biggs. Krisna Gilbert's desire was to decrease dependency on fossil fuel by converting operations to 90% solar. Utilizing a new USDA program for alternative energy assisted with a grant application, which was funded to cover 25% of the cost and create one job.

- 4) **Career Pathways:** Clean Energy Training partnership with Butte College and Energy Efficiency Training Center. March 15, 2011 received a California Energy Commission AB118 grant for Propane Autogas Retrofit training, over 136 new and incumbent trainings for jobs in the new alternative fuel and vehicle sector.

JOBS:

70 new job placements since June 2010

Innovation Lab Grand Opening, Thursday May 12, 2011

- 4:00 Emerging Business Investor Presentations
- 5:00 Ribbon Cutting
- 5:30 Emerging Product Showcase (Grown-Up Science Fair)